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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [OVIP](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [UNSC](#) [CD](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE MEETS CHADIAN
PRESIDENT DEBY ITNO

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR MARC M. WALL FOR REASONS 1.4(B)
AND (D)

¶1. (S) SUMMARY: Deputy Secretary Negroponte met President Idriss Deby Itno and Foreign Minister (FM) Alam-mi late Monday afternoon April 16, in the Chadian capital of N'Djamena. In both meetings the Deputy Secretary discussed regional peace and stability, the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Darfur and eastern Chad, and the possibility of a United Nations military presence on Chad's eastern border with Sudan. He delivered a message that the United States supports a robust hybrid United Nations force for Darfur, and requested that Chad keep the possibility of a U.N. military force for eastern Chad under active consideration. The Deputy Secretary received a read-out of recent Janjaweed attacks inside Chad's eastern border from the FM, and heard a lengthy history of the Darfur crisis from President Deby, who also expressed his continued reluctance to accept a full U.N. force for fear of further destabilizing his already fragile regime. The President and the Deputy Secretary agreed to continue dialogue on Chad's request to purchase C-130 military transport aircraft from the United States, and the U.S. request for overflight clearance for U.S. planes to gather information on the Sudan border region. END SUMMARY

Foreign Minister: Recent Events on the Border

¶2. (SBU) Deputy Secretary Negroponte met President Idriss Deby Itno and Foreign Minister Ahmat Alam-mi (FM) in separate meetings on the afternoon of April 16. The Deputy Secretary was accompanied to both meetings by the Ambassador, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer, National

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Security Council Senior Director for African Affairs Bobby Pittman, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator William Garvelink, Colonel Cecil Dennis Giddens from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and Embassy N'Djamena PAO (notetaker). The Deputy Secretary delivered a message to both the President and the Foreign Minister that the United States is committed to working with all parties on a diplomatic solution to the regional crisis surrounding Darfur, keeping pressure on the Government of Sudan to accept a robust hybrid U.N. peacekeeping force, and he encouraged the Government of Chad to continue to actively consider accepting a large U.N. peacekeeping force for eastern Chad.

¶3. (SBU) The Deputy Secretary met first with Chadian Foreign Minister Alam-mi, who had returned on April 15 from Khartoum, where he had "expressed his regret" but "not apologized" about Chadian army attacks on Sudanese army forces in the eastern border area, in which 17 Sudanese soldiers were killed, following what the FM described as attacks by Chadian mercenaries and Sudanese army forces. The FM informed The Deputy Secretary of tentative plans for a Presidential meeting April 26-27 between Deby and President Bechir. The

FM blamed the recent attacks in Eastern Chad on Saleh Gosh, who, according to the FM, is manipulating President Bechir for his own personal advantage. The FM said that Chad is still holding many of the prisoners from last week's attacks, and that they are "not regular soldiers" but rather "spies" supported fully by Sudan. Summarizing his frequently-repeated message, the FM said "we are the victims, and we want peace."

Foreign Minister: Hybrid Force for Sudan and U.N. in Chad

¶4. (SBU) The Deputy Secretary told the FM that the U.S. supports a hybrid African Union/United Nations force with a single, unified command for Darfur. While President Bechir essentially wants the U.N. to give money to the A.U., the United States supports a significant increase up to 17,000 troops for the region. On Chad, the Deputy Secretary delivered the message that the U.S. supports a robust U.N. military presence to be deployed along the eastern border, and that a police and gendarmes force will not suffice. The FM expressed the view that Chad does not want to risk further complicating the situation and upsetting their neighbors, in particular Sudan and Libya. The FM said that it will likely take six to eight months for a U.N. force to be put in place, implying that Sudan would have ample time to further destabilize Chad following Chad's acceptance of a force, but before such a force could be deployed. "Who will stand by us," the FM wondered aloud? "France is here but they are hesitating," he said, and "you (the United States) are not there to back us." "We want heavily-armed gendarmes with a clear humanitarian mandate," the FM said.

President Deby: C-130s

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¶5. (SBU) In his meeting with President Idriss Deby Itno, the Deputy Secretary raised Chad's request to purchase a number of C-130 military transport aircraft from the U.S. The Deputy Secretary said that the U.S. is prepared to send a team from the Pentagon as soon as May to talk about different options, including possible purchase of other types of aircraft that might meet Chad's needs, and be available much sooner than the C-130s. The President responded positively, recalling nostalgically his own role in purchasing two C-130s from the U.S. when he was a minister in Hissein Habre's government in the late 1980s. Deby expressed his personal thanks to President Bush, and said that Chad is certainly interested in exploring all possibilities.

Darfur and Eastern Chad: 3 Key Elements

¶6. (SBU) The Deputy Secretary outlined the United States' view on three key elements to the Darfur crisis: humanitarian, security, and political. The Deputy Secretary said that the humanitarian situation is relatively stable, with refugees and internally-displaced persons (IDPs) receiving adequate food, water, medical care, etc. In terms of security, the crisis is worsening, with refugees and IDPs continuing to arrive in camps. The Government of Sudan is not helping matters as it has thus far refused to disarm the Janjaweed militias. The political situation surrounding the humanitarian crisis is also worsening. The non-signatories of the Darfur peace accords have thus far refused to sit at the negotiating table, and Khartoum continues to actively resist diplomatic efforts towards peace, trying to divide the non-signatories even more amongst themselves. The Deputy Secretary said that the United States is especially concerned

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with 1) improving security in the border region and 2) encouraging the non-signatories to come to the negotiating table. The Deputy Secretary told President Deby that Sudan has expressed a desire for improved relations with the U.S., but that we have made it clear that our bilateral relations with Sudan cannot improve until the situation in Darfur improves.

President Deby's view of Darfur

17. (SBU) The President expressed his view that the Darfur crisis has been poorly managed from its beginnings in 2003, and that it continues to affect the whole region, despite Chad's significant efforts to sound the alarm. The President said that, as early as 2004, he told leaders at an African Union summit that Chad could not handle the crisis alone and that the United Nations should take over. The President characterized the GOS strategy in Darfur as simple: to move all of the black Africans out, either to Chad or to somewhere else in Sudan, and to bring in people of "Arab origin." The President said that the international community must take things in hand, before the situation spills over into Nigeria, Niger, Mali, and the whole sub-region. The GOS has promised to disarm the Janjaweed, he said, but in fact continues to arm, train, and support them, and even to pay them monthly salaries. If the GOS is refusing a U.N. force, it is because they are hiding the atrocities they have committed in Darfur, the President said. The Deputy Secretary responded that the U.S. fully agrees that something

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decisive needs to be done. The Deputy Secretary requested that the President "continue to actively consider bringing peacekeeping forces to your side of the border." The President echoed the FM's concerns of further destabilizing the region by agreeing to a U.N. military force in Chad. Sudan, Libya, and "many other countries in the African Union" do not want such a force, the President added. "The situation calls for a realistic solution that fits the context," he said.

President Deby: Moving Refugee Camps

18. (SBU) The President raised the possibility of moving some of the more vulnerable camps -- those located close to the border -- to other parts of Chad, saying that such a move would help to stabilize the border region and also reduce tensions with Sudan, since Sudanese rebels could no longer recruit from and operate in refugee camps located far from the border. The Deputy Secretary responded that this is something the United Nations and humanitarian partners would have to study very carefully.

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Overflight

19. (S) The Deputy Secretary closed with a discussion of the letter from the Secretary to President Deby, and in particular the request for United States overflight of Chadian territory to gather information on the situation on the border region. The President said that this was "a very interesting issue and a very important offer" that the GOC was considering, and that he would provide an answer to the request in the days to come.

Terrorism and Regional Stability

¶10. (SBU) The President closed with a brief discussion of his views on Chad's bilateral relations with the United States, saying that while he was satisfied with our military, security and intelligence cooperation, he hoped to see it grow in the coming years. Our two countries need to continue to work together to stop the spread of terrorist groups in the region, the President said. The President fondly remembered the 1980s as a time of very rich cooperation between the United States and Chad, and although "it is difficult to ask for the return of USAID," he appeared to be doing just that when he asked for "better support and help from the United States."

¶11. (U) The Deputy Secretary cleared on this cable.

¶12. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.

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